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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 002710

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF AND AF/E  
LODNON, PARIS, ROME FOR AFRICA WATCHER  
CJTF-HOA FOR RADM HART AND POLAD  
USCENTCOM FOR POLAD

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [SO](#) [ET](#) [SU](#) [ER](#)

SUBJECT: MELES DISCUSSES REGIONAL EVENTS WITH CJTF-HOA

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DONALD YAMAMOTO FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (S/NF) Prime Minister Meles thanked Admiral Hart August 30 for Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa's (CJTF-HOA) civil affairs projects, logistical support, and training for the Ethiopian military. The Prime Minister lamented that Ethiopia bears the primary burden in Somalia for providing force protection for the Transnational Federal Government (TFG) as well as training the officials and military with little financial assistance or support from the international community. He expressed doubt that there would be further additions to AMISOM forces for Somalia. Meles reviewed Ethiopia's concerns in the region, highlighting Somalia as its major challenge. The Prime Minister felt that the TFG would be able to survive allowing Ethiopian troops to withdraw soon. After the next training session by the Ethiopian military, TFG forces will be able to handle extremists in most parts of Somalia, except for the lower Juba area from Kismayo south. If these elements can be contained the TFG will continue to survive.

¶2. (S/NF) The Prime Minister reviewed threats posed by the ONLF (Ogadeni National Liberation Front) and other insurgents to Ethiopia's domestic stability, Eritrea's destabilizing activities, and Sudan peace efforts, noting that Ethiopia is committed to providing peace keeping troops for Sudan. Meles did not mention Eritrea at any great length. He concluded by seeking CJTF-HOA's continued focus on enhancing Ethiopia's command and staff college and logistical support. End Summary

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CJTF-HOA IS KEY TO REGIONAL INTERACTION  
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¶3. (S/NF) The Prime Minister met August 30 with CJTF-HOA Commander Admiral Hart, Ambassador, DATT, CJTF Liaison Officer and the Admiral's personal assistant to review U.S. military programs for the region. Admiral Hart briefed the Prime Minister, MFA Director General for North America and the PM's chief of staff on CJTF-HOA's civil affairs projects and training programs in Ethiopia and the region, and commitment to support Ethiopia's request for spare parts for

C-130 aircraft and to continue civil affairs projects. The Prime Minister expressed appreciation for CJTF-HOA's efforts and underscored support from CENTCOM in promotion of U.S.-established Command and Staff College as the top priority in professionalizing the Ethiopian military. Meles stressed the need for continued logistical support, primarily spare parts for aircraft were also essential.

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SOMALIA OPERATIONS  
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14. (S/NF) The Prime Minister lamented that Ethiopia continues to carry the primary burden of providing force protection for the TFG, support for the Ugandan troops, and training of TFG officials and military. Thus far, the international community has not responded adequately to calls to provide the financial assistance to support the TFG, undercutting its viability and chance of survival. Besides the United States, the Prime Minister praised Saudi Arabia for its financial contribution to the TFG. On AMISOM troop deployments, Meles expressed deep pessimism that Ugandan troops would soon be relieved with additional troops. Meles gave Burundi only a 30 percent chance of being deployed and a much smaller chance of any other country providing troops for Somalia operations. Ethiopia has, and will continue to, finance training for TFG officials in hopes of creating capacity for the TFG to operate a government. Further, Ethiopia has trained some 600-700 TFG troops from various clans, forming an integrated brigade. Should this effort succeed, another one thousand troops will be trained and Meles expressed his hope that this would be sufficient to stabilize the TFG and allow Ethiopia troops to leave Somalia. The PM shared that there is concern among the

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newly trained TFG troops that they will be forced to rejoin their clan militias instead of being allowed to participate as a National Force. A joint Ugandan-Ethiopian military training program of TFG troops failed when Uganda could not meet its commitment due to lack of funds. The Ethiopian troops proceeded with training of TFG forces in Mogadishu. Meles said that they hoped to pull out some Ethiopian troops by the summer but would retain their flexibility to react to the situation inside Somalia. Meles believes that it would be impossible to stop the violence completely but said that it could be managed. He said that "terrorism" is their primary focus and that a lot of the terrorist attacks going on in Mogadishu are being done by "free lancers" who need the money.

15. (S/NF) The Prime Minister used the phrase "feckless" to express his frustration with the TFG and leadership across a spectrum of government institutions. He noted the leadership needed to be more effective in forming a cohesive government. The National Reconciliation Congress would hopefully support the strengthening of the TFG. Financial challenges, fighting corruption and securing assistance will be key to the TFG's survival. Overall, the Prime Minister was confident that the TFG would survive. After the next training program of TFG military personnel, the TFG would be able to handle insurgents and extremists in most of Somalia. The hard-core extremists in the lower Juba area, from Kismayo and to the south, are tough. But a containment strategy would help limit operations by extremists and allow the TFG to consolidate their hold on the rest of the country.

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OGADEN AND ERITREA  
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16. (S/NF) Meles believes that insurgent operations by the ONLF in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia pose the greatest domestic threat to their stability and does not want this to become a defining issue. Symptomatic of the problems in the neighboring Somalia, Prime Minister Meles felt that the ONLF can be contained and the Ogaden region stabilized. Complaining about misinformation about the Ogaden, Meles underscored that the situation is improving. Eritrea, the

Prime Minister pointed out, was taking advantage of regional strife to undermine regional peace and security. Meles said that he understands that CJTF-HOA may not want to involve themselves in the Ogaden issue, but CJTF-HOA could play a positive role in contribution to regional stability by continuing its programs in the region and expanding its coordination with the GOE from information sharing to logistical support. Meles stated that the Ogaden situation cannot be resolved by military means alone and also must address food issues. Eritrea has been engaged in activities to exacerbate regional instability through arms flows to insurgents and support for operations against Ethiopia as well as for rebel groups in Ethiopia, Meles argued. Meles also believes the Eritrea situation can be resolved peacefully and that Ethiopia would not allow Eritrea to provoke them. He said that at present Ethiopia would maintain the status quo.

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SUDAN  
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¶7. (S/NF) Meles commented that Sudan was Ethiopia's second major challenge after Somalia. To support stabilization of Sudan, Ethiopia is committed to providing peace keeping troops for Sudan. Regardless of Ethiopia's financial strain in sustaining operations in Somalia, Meles regarded Sudan as critical to regional peace and to Ethiopia's security.

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COMMENT  
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¶8. (S/NF) Meles' warm reception of Admiral Hart underscores the evolving perception of the U.S. Only a few months ago, the ENDF complained bitterly about the lack of U.S. commitment to meet past promises. Since then, Central Command, CJTF-HOA and other DOD elements along with State

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Department funding have procured 3 million USD in C-130 spare parts a major thorn in bilateral relations since 2000 when U.S. officials promised to provide the spare parts. Further, DOD elements are identifying assigned personnel to support the U.S.-established and State Department financed Command and Staff college, a high priority for the GOE, but it is only a temporary fix. Committed funding and staffing needs to be identified immediately and put into effect if the school is to remain open. Further, strong USG support for humanitarian efforts in the Ogaden and support for Ethiopia and the African Union in Somalia have enhanced bilateral relations.  
YAMAMOTO